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Editorial

WE said in April that we hoped someone would reply to the Bishop of Oxford's arguments concerning the relation between baptism and confirmation. Prof. Ramsey does this, and a good deal more. All we would say at present is that, if the separation of confirmation and first communion from baptism is to be satisfactorily explained and defended, it seems to us that this can be done only along the lines that are indicated by Prof. Ramsey.

We are not, however, as confident as he is that a fresh examination of our Western theology and practice will lead us to say "no" to the plea for a recovery of the primitive pattern of Christian initiation. In particular, we do not see how it is that, if infants may rightly be baptized, they may rightly be deprived of holy communion. As regards this point, we append two quotations which have given us food for thought.

One is from Dr Darwell Stone, who wrote:

> The present writer believes that the tendency of his mind is to attach great importance to the traditions of the West, and to be very slow in wishing for changes in established religious customs. In this matter, the careful study and thought of many years have failed to show him justification for the Western refusal of Communion to those who have not reached years of discretion. While he would strongly deprecate any hasty or rash interference with the methods which long use has sanctioned, it is a hope very near his heart that at some future day Western Christendom may at length by well-considered and wisely taken steps retrace what he cannot but regard as a wrong path and restore the practice of the primitive Church.[1]

The other is from an article on "Treasures of Devotion from the Syrian Liturgy of Malabar" which Bishop Pakenham-Walsh contributed to *The Star of the East* (December, 1944):

> I only realized while I was writing this article that the custom of communicating infants had been universal in the whole Church, East and West, up to the middle ages, and is defended by St Augustine and other fathers. All that can be urged theologically in favour of Infant Baptism can be urged in favour of Infant Communion; and certainly my experience in our Ashram is leading me to see a very great value in it. When the little ones of our Ashram are brought up by their parents, to receive along with them the consecrated Elements, one feels that it is a great encouragement to their parents to have faith in the Love of the Saviour giving Himself for and to the little ones, to the extent they are able to receive Him, and to continue stedfastly to lead those children on to love and serve their Divine Redeemer, and to become themselves earnest communicants.
>
> The little ones soon come to realize and show by their behaviour that it is something very holy and solemn to which they are brought, and as they grow up eucharistic worship and eucharistic reception become natural to them.
>
> The Syrian Church . . . suffers from the fact that there is no solemn ceremony

[1] See F. L. Cross, *Darwell Stone*, p. 73.

whereby young people can publicly renew the promises made for them in Baptism, and receive the Holy Spirit for their life of service as full members of the Church. The Confirmation of the Western Church, which is a completion of Baptism, is one of the great values which we have to offer to the Eastern Churches. I can conceive of the Eastern Church, while retaining its chrism in Baptism, and welcoming its children from their earliest years to the Lord's Supper, introducing a service of Ordination of the Layman (as Bishop Westcott loved to designate Confirmation), by the laying-on-of-hands of the Bishop conveying to the Layman the gift of the Holy Spirit for that life of witness and service in the Church to which Christ calls all his followers.[1]

The Doctrine of Confirmation

"We must remember that the two sacraments were normally conferred within five or ten minutes of each other." This sentence from Dom Gregory Dix (*The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 260) describes the practice of baptism and confirmation in patristic times. A further sentence describes the doctrinal meaning of the rites: " 'The Spirit' is the power or presence of the Ascended Christ which incarnates His glorified Body of heaven in the 'Body of Christ,' the Church on earth. Baptism incorporates a man into that Body from the eternal point of view, but the gift of 'the Spirit' in confirmation is what makes him a living member of that Body *within time*. Thus only the confirmed may take part in the eucharist, which is the vital act of the Body in time." The doctrine is clear-cut. By baptism and confirmation membership in the Church on earth is conferred. The unconfirmed have not received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

But what if baptism and confirmation come to be separated not by five or ten minutes but by ten or fifteen years? In Western Christianity a development of doctrine can be seen. It is apparent both in Thomas Aquinas and in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, where confirmation is expounded not as a sacrament of initiation but as a sacrament of growth. It appears also in the Book of Common Prayer, for in 1552 the words of the confirmation prayer, "Send down from heaven, we beseech thee, O Lord, upon them thy Holy Ghost the Comforter with the manifold gifts of grace," were replaced by the words, "Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace." The words indeed betoken a change of emphasis. But there has been considerable division of opinion amongst theologians as to the doctrine which should be taught in connexion with the developed Western practice. Some have pleaded for the application of the patristic doctrine, that in confirmation alone the sacramental gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is bestowed; conspicuous among those who have upheld this view were Dr A. J. Mason and Fr Puller. Others have replied that the application of this doctrine is legitimate only if baptism and confirmation be brought together. "A theory," wrote Dr Quick, "which declares that Confirmation marks the first

[1] We agree, however, with Prof. Ramsey's caveat against the use of the expression "the ordination of the layman," illuminating as it appears at first sight.

gift of the indwelling Spirit, and a practice which places Confirmation a dozen years or more after Baptism, point, when taken together, to conclusions which are intolerable" (*The Christian Sacraments*, p. 184).

Recently the doctrine of confirmation has been brought into prominence by the publication of the Interim Report of the Committees of the Convocations of Canterbury and York on Confirmation. The Committees commend to the study of the Church a *Schedule* containing a treatment of the doctrine. In the few pages devoted to this treatment they reject the patristic doctrine as inapplicable when the two rites are separated, they accept without question the developed practice of the West together with the change of doctrinal emphasis which has normally been associated with it, they suggest that the distinctive purpose of the rite of confirmation is to consecrate the baptized members of the Church for the priesthood of the laity, and they say that there is no theological principle to exclude the postponement of confirmation until after admission to holy communion.

It is to be hoped that the *Schedule* will arouse theological discussion, no less than consideration of the practical questions which fill five-sixths of its pages. Already the *Schedule* has evoked strong criticism from the Bishop of Oxford in the *Oxford Diocesan Magazine*, November and December, 1944. The Bishop upholds the patristic doctrine as no less true when the two rites are separated, and insists that only in confirmation is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit given and only in confirmation are we made members of the Church. He criticizes the confirmation prayer in the 1552 and 1662 rites as containing a doctrine that is "a modernism of a dangerous kind." He regrets that the Committees accepted this doctrine uncritically. As to a partaking in the Holy Spirit by baptized Christians before their confirmation the Bishop can say only: "The most that the tradition involves is that the Holy Spirit has not been received *sacramentally*, or within the orbit of the Church's ordinances; it does not for a moment exclude the possibility of uncovenanted operations of the Spirit" (p. 99). Thus if baptized children are partakers of the Holy Spirit before their confirmation they are so, like some of the heathen, only through His uncovenanted activity. It is on the ground of these doctrines concerning confirmation and church-membership that the Bishop deprecates the suggestion that confirmation might be postponed until a later stage than admission to first communion.

Three doctrinal questions have thus come into prominence: the relation of baptism to church-membership and to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the distinctive gift in confirmation, the relation between confirmation and holy communion.

1. It is emphatically the teaching of the Prayer Book that in the rite of holy baptism we are made members of Christ and of the Church which is His Body. (The Bishop of Oxford notes that church-membership is not mentioned among the effects of baptism in the Catechism. But how can one be a "member of Christ" without being a "member of His Body"?) As a corollary of this teaching many Anglican divines have refused to deny that baptized children participate in the Holy Spirit. Thus Hooker: "Baptism is a sacrament which God hath in-

stituted in His Church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so through His most precious merit obtain as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life" (*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. lx. 2); "God doth bestow presently [in Baptism] remission of sins and the Holy Ghost" (v. lxiv. 4). So Jewel: "Baptized infants are the temples and tabernacles of the Holy Ghost" (*Treatise on the Sacraments*, Parker Society edn., p. 1128). So Barrow: "In Baptism the gift of God's Holy Spirit is conferred" (*Of Baptism*, § 2). So Beveridge: "As baptizing necessarily implies the use of water, so our being made thereby disciples of Christ as necessarily implies our partaking of His Spirit; for all that are baptized, and so made the disciples of Christ, are thereby made the members of His Body; and are therefore said to be 'baptized into Christ.' But they who are in Christ members of His Body, must needs partake of the Spirit that is in Him their head" (Sermon xxxv, *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 183-4). The inference drawn by Beveridge in this passage seems irresistible; and justice needs to be done to several phrases in the Prayer Book rite of baptism: "sanctify him with the Holy Ghost," "that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him," "give thy Holy Spirit to this infant that he may be born again," "doubt ye not . . . that He will . . . bestow upon him the Holy Ghost." Jeremy Taylor's teaching is of special importance. His work Χρίσις Τελειωτίκη, *or A Discourse of Confirmation*, stands out as an exposition of the rite as being *par excellence* the occasion when the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed; its congruity with patristic teaching is apparent throughout. Yet the author combined this teaching with a refusal to draw negative inferences about baptism, for in another work he explains "made partakers of the Holy Ghost" in connexion with baptism (*cf. Life of our Blessed Lord*, Part I, discourse 6, §§ 20-23).

Such teaching being familiar, in the Prayer Book and in many Anglican divines, the doctrine of confirmation which Dr Mason and Fr Puller revived in the latter part of the nineteenth century was regarded by many contemporary Anglican scholars as subversive of the teaching of the Prayer Book and of sound theology. The criticisms of Dr William Bright were weighty. His words in *Morality in Doctrine* (p. 91) are well known: "A theory which (1) admits that baptism involves 'regeneration' and the 'quickening touch' of the Spirit, and 'in a sense' a reception of Him by reason of 'incorporation into Christ,' yet (2) denies to the baptized, as such, that personal indwelling of the Spirit which is the 'great prerogative of the Gospel dispensation,' forbids them to consider themselves as 'temples of the Holy Ghost,' confines the 'baptism with the Holy Ghost' to confirmation, and even speaks of the rite performed at the font as baptism only 'in the modern sense,' can hardly be said to commend itself by consistency, and would seem to require a serious alteration in the pastoral teaching of the clergy, in the practice of the Church, and in the text of the Prayer Book offices and Catechism." Probably less well known is a letter of

Dr Bright included in the *Life and Letters of T. T. Carter* (p. 199): "Another anxiety has been caused, I feel, by the theory that there is no 'indwelling of the Holy Spirit' *in the baptized as such.* At any rate, a soul may be 'in Christ' and yet not 'in the Holy Spirit'; may be regenerated, yet have no presence of the Life-giver; may be grafted into the body mystical, yet not indwelt by the Spirit, which is the very formative principle of that Body; and then, as it seemed to me, a separation will be established between the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit, to the great disturbance of theological unity. Why do Cambridge men instinctively attempt to strike out lines of their own, and seem to ignore the logical consequences of their own premises?"

These quotations form the best rejoinder to the Bishop of Oxford's contention. The "dangerous modernism" which he laments is the doctrine of a long line of Anglican theologians from Hooker to Bright, and some elements in it do not lack support in the Fathers, as Dr Darwell Stone used to remind us. It may be necessary to examine afresh the whole Western development and the practice and teaching of the Prayer Book which is a part of it. But it seems that only if the Church of England were to move towards the bringing together of the two rites, whether by infant confirmation or by the postponing of baptism, would the doctrine commended by the Bishop of Oxford win larger support. For as long as the rites are separated by a good many years the doctrine, as Dr Quick said, "points to conclusions which are intolerable."

2. What of the distinctive gift in confirmation when the two rites are separated? Here the authors of the *Schedule* reject several suggested interpretations and, rather rashly, suggest a particular interpretation which they wish to commend. They reject the view that the Holy Spirit acts in baptism as an external agent and comes in confirmation as an inward presence. This was Mason's view (*The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism*, pp. 433-452), and it may seem to merit fuller consideration. But it is very difficult to see what it means. Dr Quick once told me in conversation that he found himself incapable of discussing this view since he could not understand what the distinction between an "external" and an "internal" action of the Spirit meant. The view that there is a distinction between the *grace* of the Holy Spirit in baptism and the *gifts* of the Holy Spirit in confirmation perhaps claims more attention than the Committees gave to it, but the best known exposition of it in Wotherspoon's *Religious Values in the Sacraments* is not without real difficulty. Very cautiously Dr Darwell Stone once suggested this distinction: "It may be true that He is present within the soul of the baptized but unconfirmed rather indirectly than directly, rather because He dwells in the sacred Humanity of Christ to which the baptized are joined than because of a special descent upon them, while in the confirmed He comes to be present rather directly than indirectly—rather because of His special descent, falling upon them, to use the words of Holy Scripture, than for any other reason" (*Church Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1898, xlv, p. 381). But if we dare to say so much, should it not be "non ut illud diceretur, sed

ne taceretur"? If a precise description of the distinction can ever be given it will no doubt have to take fuller account of the facts that the Holy Spirit is personal and that His activity is a personal activity in relation to human persons; and this leads us into very deep water where many of the familiar analogies and metaphors fail. But is there harm in a frank eschewing of precise definition, and in an avowal that the purpose of confirmation is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the candidates without any denial that baptized Christians are already partakers of Him in virtue of their baptism? A study of Jeremy Taylor's magnificent treatise takes us behind our familiar discussions and suggests that perhaps the trouble lies not in our answers to our questions but in our asking them.

But the joint committees propose their own interpretation. "At Confirmation the Christian, who is already a member of the people of Christ, is solemnly consecrated and commissioned, by the laying-on-of-hands with prayer, for the exercise of that ministry which his membership entails. . . . Confirmation may be truly described as 'the ordination of the laity.' Those who receive it are 'sealed' and set apart for a life-long vocation and ministry" (p. 11).

Is this sound theology? There is a good deal of evidence from the early Church to connect the unction in confirmation with the admission of the candidate to the royal priesthood of the Church (*cf.* A. T. Wirgman, *The Doctrine of Confirmation*, pp. 409-416). We can also quote Jeremy Taylor that "in confirmation we receive the unction from above, that is, that we are then most signally made kings and priests unto God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (Taylor, *op. cit.*), and he cites a couplet from Prudentius,

> Post inscripta oleo frontes signacula, per quæ
> Unguentum regale datum est, et chrisma perenne.

Amongst modern authorities there is Bishop John Wordsworth: "What then does Confirmation mean to us especially? It means being consecrated and ordained to the lay-priesthood, or rather, to put it still more broadly, to share in the three Messianic offices of our Saviour, those of Prophet, Priest and King" (*Life of Bishop John Wordsworth*, p. 276). Clearly the joint committees were on a right track.

Yet further reflection suggests that to introduce the notion of "ordination" to a priesthood is to become involved in very doubtful doctrine. For the priesthood of the laity is not a priesthood bestowed upon those who are not clergymen in contrast with that bestowed upon the clergy, nor is it an office given to individuals. Rather is it the common priesthood of the whole *laos* of God or body of Christ. The royal priesthood and the holy nation are coextensive (1 Pet. ii, 9), and initiation into the Church is initiation into its common corporate priesthood. Jerome's words are familiar: "Sacerdotium laici, id est baptisma"; and if baptism admits us to the Church it thereby makes us partakers of the Church's common priesthood in Christ. It seems therefore that the phrase "ordination of the laity" is mistaken and ought to be discouraged. Can we say more than that in confirmation we are strengthened and consecrated for the tasks and privileges

which our membership in the Church entails, including the fulfilment of that priesthood in which, as members of the people of Christ, we share?

3. Lastly, the relation of confirmation to holy communion. The joint committees commend to the consideration of the Church three practical policies, one of which is to postpone confirmation for a number of years after admission to the reception of holy communion. But the committees refrain from expressing their own preference as between the policies. They affirm only that none of them would, in their view, involve doctrinal heresy.

"There is no absolute doctrinal necessity for confirmation to precede communion" (p. 15), ". . . there is no theological principle which rules out the proposal that confirmation might normally follow rather than precede admission to the Holy Communion" (p. 46). These are bold statements. The evidence upon which they are based is (*a*) the fact that baptism and not confirmation is in the West the rite of admission to the Church; (*b*) the rubric which admits to communion those who are "ready and desirous to be confirmed"; (*c*) the many precedents in Western practice, especially amongst Roman Catholics, for putting confirmation at a later date than admission to first communion. The phrases "doctrinal necessity" and "theological principle" are, of course, rather indefinite; but I think they mean that the communion of the unconfirmed is not, amongst orthodox Western Catholics, unthinkable as the communion of the unbaptized would be unthinkable. *Per contra* the committees do give some strong reasons for demanding confirmation before communion. They quote some powerful words from the *Doctrine Report* on the appropriateness of the traditional order, and they add that their own interpretation of confirmation in connexion with lay-priesthood adds force to this appropriateness. Many readers of the *Schedule* may feel that these reasons are stronger than anything which is said on the other side. Yet the *Schedule* disclaims an "absolute doctrinal necessity" for the traditional sequence and would give the proposal to postpone confirmation the chance of whatever consideration it may get.

Upon what does the necessity for the traditional sequence—baptism, confirmation, holy communion—rest? According to the Bishop of Oxford, it rests upon the fact that only in confirmation are we given the sacramental indwelling of the Holy Spirit and only in confirmation do we become members of the Church. Apart from these propositions he disclaims the possibility of saying that the traditional sequence is necessary. "For if it is baptism which admits to the Church, why should some subordinate rite (such as confirmation now becomes) be interposed between this initiation and the sacred Family meal"? (p. 112). If therefore we believe that the Prayer Book teaches that baptism admits to the Church, that the Prayer Book is right so to teach, and that the theology of Hooker, Beveridge and Bright is true, then the Bishop of Oxford offers us no ground for regarding confirmation as indispensable before admission to communion. Indeed, the difficulty of finding a clear ground on the basis of that theology is one of his reasons for thinking it to be a "dangerous modernism."

If then we follow the belief that the baptized are members of the Church, what is our reason for insisting upon confirmation before communion? The question demands attention, for by our acceptance of the Western development we hamper ourselves from appealing *tout court* to considerations that rest upon the patristic practice. The answer does not seem clear. Is it that the requirement of confirmation before communion is a disciplinary measure of great importance for the edification of the Church and for the health of the souls of its members? Or do we go farther and say that confirmation is the rite whose purpose is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, a rite which confers "character" so that a *confirmed* Christian differs from the unconfirmed in that he has been made ready, by the sacramental rite ordained for the purpose, for the participation in all his Christian privileges? This is not clear-cut in definition, but it may be of very great weight in practice; and it clings to the initiatory aspect of confirmation without unchurching the baptized.

Some reflections in conclusion. The *Schedule* has been criticized for its radicalism in inviting discussion of the proposal to postpone confirmation. But the real need is for a far greater radicalism—namely, a fresh examination of our whole Western theology and practice, including *the doctrine both of confirmation and of infant baptism together.* Neither the practical nor the doctrinal problems of the two rites can be solved in separation. The Convocation Committee on Baptism lamentably neglected the doctrinal questions, and its work may have to be done all over again. The Committees on Confirmation have plunged into the theology of their subject, and, whatever may be the limitations of their own brief treatment of it, they have aroused a fresh interest in the doctrine. What is now vital is that the discussion of the two rites should be drawn together, on both the practical and the doctrinal levels, and that there should be in the Church *a theological study of Christian initiation as a whole*, a study properly theological and yet enriched by considerations of pastoral experience.

In this study there is little doubt that, besides the plea for detaching the ratification of vows from the confirmation service and the plea for the postponing of confirmation, there will also be a plea for a revision of practice as to infant baptism. The scandals and unrealities in connexion with it press increasingly upon the consciences of many members of the clergy, and there is much to be said for this course: (1) to baptize in infancy the children of strictly practising church-people, (2) to postpone the baptism of other children until they have had a recognizable catechumenate in church or school and are seen to be likely to persevere. In such cases baptism and confirmation would come nearer together in time, sometimes as near as the "five or ten minutes" of patristic days. The setting of patristic doctrine would return, and with it the doctrine itself. In any case we must be ready to question our Western developments; for may not the unity and synthesis which we seek in many aspects of Christian life come from an escape from our Western "lopsidedness" (both medieval and reformed) and a recovery of the primitive pattern? The plea for this view will demand our serious attention.

Yet, while feeling the force of this plea, I believe that the answer to it will be "no" rather than "yes." For is our Western development a mistake and the doctrine that has accompanied it all a distortion? The apostolic practice was the admission of adults to the Church and their anointing with the Holy Spirit in the closely linked rites of baptism and confirmation, *through faith*. The Church must be loyal to this apostolic fact in its totality, including the important words "through faith." Infant baptism is right because the Church is a family; but the retaining of the other part of the apostolic fact at an age of discretion (or even at an age still more mature) is right because of the words "through faith" and the implication of the words for heart and mind and will. Our Western practice seeks to reproduce in its own way the totality of the apostolic fact; and if it fails to do so wholly, did the patristic way succeed in doing so wholly and does the Eastern way succeed?

Further, we have to ask whether there is not in the experience of the Church of England something greatly to be treasured. The adherence to a doctrine which is not "clear-cut" has not prevented confirmation from holding a place of very great authority and distinctiveness in the life of our Church; to lack "clear-cut-ness" is not to lack firmness of position. To quote Bishop John Wordsworth once more: "It is not a mere accident that the bent of the Greek mind is specially towards making much of baptism, the bent of the Roman mind towards the theology and ceremonial of the Eucharist, but the bent of the English mind is rather towards dignifying and making much of the rite of confirmation. There can be no doubt that it has grown to be of special interest and importance to ourselves, in the natural course of God's providence, dealing with a practical and personally religious people. Indeed, the feeling in this country dates back several centuries before the Reformation. England is perhaps the one country in Christendom where the laying on of hands has longest existed as the outward sign of Confirmation" (*Life*, p. 276). These words remind us of the wrong that may be done by any undervaluing of the distinctive experience of the Church of England. Today the difficulties, weaknesses and lapses in our parochial life are leading the clergy to seek a stricter discipline in the administration both of baptism and of confirmation. But it is not clear that this stricter discipline is to be found only in a recovery of the patristic practice and teaching, for the Anglican tradition may provide a basis for it no less firm and sure. This would mean a discipline linked not with one *focus* but with two *foci*: baptism, with in some cases a catechumenate to precede it; confirmation, with a stricter preparation to lead to it. We need indeed to examine all our traditions and methods in the light of the whole of Catholic practice and theology, but it is not certain that such examination will lead us to abandon our use of confirmation as the rite wherein those who are already members of the Church are *strengthened* with the sevenfold gift of the Spirit for their warfare in the world.

A. M. Ramsey.

Durham.

Country Preaching

"THE country parson preacheth constantly," says George Herbert. "The pulpit is his joy and his throne."[1]

The good priest is a diligent and cheerful preacher. He takes care in the preparation of his sermons, and prays for the help of the Holy Spirit, believing that God will not excuse him the one, or deny him the other. He avoids words and phrases which his people cannot understand; his task is to edify them, and this cannot be done if his discourse flies over their heads. He uses illustrations drawn from country work when they come naturally to his hand, but he does not go out of his way to find them, and, for the most part, his preaching is simple, straightforward, and unadorned.

In his sermons he keeps to the Scriptures, where he is on common ground with his people. The Bible and the Prayer Book are the only books with which both priest and people are familiar, and the good pastor rejoices to find that, while secular studies separate him from his people, the study of the Word of God draws him closer to them. As two strangers may enter into conversation because they both know one tract of country, or have mutual friends, so the parson and his people may understand each other if they know the Scriptures.

In preaching, he will best edify others who first edifies himself. Let the sins which the parson reproves be primarily his own; he will then have no difficulty in finding material for his sermons, and his exhortation will be earnest and sincere. Other men who are tempted in the same way will feel that his words are meant for them. But if the parson is tempted to unbelief, he does not make this the subject of his sermon, for it is not fitting that the time of devotion should be used for the discussion of doubt. Bishop Butler says:

"To hear religion treated of as what many deny, and which has much to be said against it as well as for it; this cannot but have a tendency to give them ill impressions at any time; and seems particularly improper for all persons at a time of devotion; even for such as are arrived at the most settled state of piety: I say at a time of devotion, when we are assembled to yield ourselves up to the full influence of the Divine presence, and to call forth into actual exercise every pious affection of the heart."[2]

The neglect of religion among country people appears to be due to thoughtlessness, and the common temptations of life, rather than to unbelief. Such things as lust, pride, and covetousness are common to all, and the good preacher has found these things in himself and sticks to that which he knows. Many sermons are futile for want of introspection.

The country parson avoids the common practice of handling, in a Christian address, such large topics as unemployment or social reform. For, speaking without industrial or political experience, he may condemn many who, struggling in responsible positions with intractable problems, do not deserve his censure. Although such a sermon may

[1] *A Priest to the Temple*, chapter vii. [2] *Charge to the Clergy of Durham*, 1751.

quiet his conscience, it is not likely to bring about any improvement in those things which rightly disturb him.

"Industrialist" is a devout and intelligent layman of the Church of England, who has a family concern for the prosperity of his small firm and for the welfare of his workmen. He is keenly aware of the mischiefs which have attended the growth of industry and, day by day, he devotes his time, energy, and ability to their remedy. Experience has helped him to a sober judgment of what is practicable and what is not; and he is impatient of those facile solutions which are often proposed as morally necessary by those who have neither industrial training nor responsibility. If you think that you know all about unemployment, and where to fix the guilt, you will not be so sure of your ground when you have conversed with him. A man who thought the ascent of a precipice easy would have as little desire to attempt it, after talking to an experienced climber, as you have to tackle Industrialist's problems when you know his difficulties.

In order to escape for a time from the perplexities which daily beset him, Industrialist took a short holiday in the country. He brought with him a few books with which to refresh his mind, and on the Lord's Day, as was his custom, he attended church. There were in the congregation a few farmers whose wives were at home cooking the dinner, one or two families who had maids to do it, and a sprinkling of children. There was also a widow recently bereaved. The familiar words of St John formed the text for the sermon: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."[1] Industrialist settled himself to hear again the doctrine of the Incarnation and to be refreshed in mind and soul by recollecting the visit of the Redeemer. But the discourse took a different turn. The members of the congregation were informed that they lived in a society marred by unemployment and social injustice. If the Church were truly to love the world, as God loves it, it must alter these things. Too long the Church had been unworldly; now it must grapple with these ills and mend them. It was unchristian that houses should be insanitary and overcrowded, that education and medical services were not equally available to all, that work should not be found for everybody. The farmers, who had never known anything but hard and continuous labour, listened stolidly to the preacher's account of the corrupting effects of enforced idleness and heard the avarice of men who were strangers to them denounced as the cause of unemployment. They learnt that a system, of which they knew nothing, was wrong in ways they could not understand. It was not clear how they could mend matters. Tomorrow they would be milking the cows and ploughing the fields, so how should they imagine that the exhortation to the Church to be up and doing was meant for them? The children played with their collection, the widow listened eagerly and found no comfort. Had the congregation been the most attentive in the world, they would have heard no sin reproved of which they could feel themselves guilty, no duty imposed which they could possibly follow, no eternal hope which they could embrace and

[1] John iii, 16.

hold fast. Nor would it have occurred to anyone who did not previously know it that the words of which the discourse claimed to be an explication referred to the visit of the Redeemer.

What of Industrialist? He was, as it were, taken by the collar and from the blessed peace of a country church dragged back into the dusty turmoil of his working days. The hand which had seized him in the name of God was neither friendly nor helpful. As a mill-owner, he was rashly accused of sinning against the public welfare, which he had striven to promote, by a man who did not even know him. He felt that the discourse revealed in every sentence a want of knowledge and practical experience which disqualified the preacher from treading on this ground. He had come to hear the doctrine and discipline of Christ from the lips of Christ's minister, and had been offered a discourse which might suitably have been expected from a kindly political idealist not very familiar with his subject.

The congregation went home to dinner. The children played, the farmers slept, the widow sat in her loneliness, and Industrialist read his books in the peace of the countryside on a Sunday afternoon. On the Lord's Day they had all attended church. But had they been given stones or bread?

The country parson generally chooses his text from the passages of Scripture appointed for the occasion; from one of the lessons, if the service be mattins or evensong, from the epistle or gospel if it be holy communion. By this means his hearers know beforehand the context of the words which he expounds, and they are encouraged to follow the reading of the Scriptures in their Bibles or Prayer Books. Perhaps they will try to guess what text the Vicar will take. When a sermon is delivered at other services its subject is suited to the occasion. At baptisms the doctrine of baptism is expounded, and at weddings the parson speaks of the duties of married people. At harvest he speaks of the earthly bread which God provides and of the heavenly bread which He teaches us to desire. At the Dedication festival, he fosters that love which country people have for their parish church. He expounds the great doctrines of the Christian faith, at least at the proper seasons of the Church's year. In Advent, he speaks of the Second Coming; at Christmas, of the Incarnation. In Lent he presses almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, as helps and tokens of repentance, which is required of those who would have the benefits of Christ's Passion, and at Easter all his theme is the Resurrection of the Lord and the new life of the redeemed. The abiding gift of the Holy Spirit is his subject at Whitsuntide, and on the Sundays after Trinity he speaks of the work of that Spirit in the hearts of believers, causing them to feel their sins, to have faith in Christ, to find joy in His service, and to hope for resurrection. Thus, in the course of the year, he has compassed the Gospel story and Christian duty.

In this way the pastor shows in his preaching the bond between the Bible and Prayer Book, the two books which form the devotional library of the layman of the Church of England. Nor is he content to show the Scriptural arrangement of the Church's year, but he also tries to show the reason for the parts and structure of each service. It

is his constant aim to help his people to see how the liturgy is founded in Scripture and to enable them to offer to God a reasonable worship. He supports his teaching by reference, not only to Scripture, but also to the Book of Common Prayer; for he thinks that those instructions will be the more readily received which are shown to lie in words which are familiar and of authority, because of their use in the worship of the Church. Further, the continual exhibition of the connexion between the Scripture and the Prayer Book which worshippers use cannot but deepen their understanding of it and increase their affection for it.

The country parson has few hearers, and their quality is best described by the words of St Paul, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."[1]

Yet he does not listen to the words of his friends or to the thoughts of his own heart if they should tell him that he deserves a larger audience. Where his lot falls, there he cheerfully does his duty, as a country parson rejoicing in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him.

Some years ago Francis was regarded by all his friends as a young clergyman of great promise. The same gifts which had made him a pleasant and fluent speaker in his college debating society were thought to be very effective in the pulpit, where they were at the service of his sound learning and earnest piety. If only he were given the right opportunities, he seemed destined for advancement in the Church.

But things have turned out otherwise. To the surprise and disappointment of his friends, Francis has settled in a rural parish, giving them a sad example of the truth of those words of our Saviour, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[2] There are few people within reach of his church, and these are divided in their religious allegiance. Sunday by Sunday he preaches to a handful of farming folk and their children. It was thought that he would soon tire of the isolation and want of company which are often the lot of a country parson, and that, depressed by the size and quality of his congregation, he would seek a church in the town, where he might have a larger and more prosperous audience. But when some years had passed, and Francis continued to disappoint these reasonable expectations, a wise and affectionate friend suggested that his gifts were largely wasted in the country and urged him to seek a town parish.

"I do not stress that it would be for your advancement to be known in a more populous and important place, though I think your want of ambition verges on imprudence. I would rather put it in this way: the Church needs your services, and all your talents should be fully employed in your calling. That is not happening now, and I beseech you, while you are still young, to give up this preference for the country, for quiet and isolation, and to seek a parish where your gifts might be fully employed to the glory of God and the welfare of His Church."

[1] 1 Cor. i, 26. [2] John iii, 8.

So spoke the wise layman, to whom Francis replied: "I thank you for your counsel. But is it not wholesome for a clergyman to remember the difference between accepting preferment and seeking it? The desire for advancement, with whatever disguise we may adorn it, is a worldly care, which he is expected to forsake. May it be contended that all professions are so far alike that this desire is equally lawful in them all, as lawful for the clergyman as for the doctor or the lawyer?

"When my work is made manifest, at the return of the Lord, the place I held will not concern me, but only how I fulfilled its duties. How will it trouble me then that my congregation was small, unless this was my fault?

"If I am sometimes disappointed, cheerfulness will keep breaking in. A priest who moves from one parish to another to shake off disappointment may hop like a bird from bough to bough and find nowhere to sing. God is good; let me be cheerful where I am."

UGTHORPE. A. C. SCUPHOLME.

BOOK REVIEWS

PROSPECT FOR CHRISTENDOM. Ed. by M. B. Reckitt. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

This comprehensive book of sixteen essays of very varied quality admirably represents the present stage in the thought of a significant Anglo-Catholic movement. In its early days, as the "Guild of St Matthew," the group played an active part in the working-class struggle. However, "for want of a thought-out sociological basis, intellectual confusion and uncertainty began to make themselves felt." Accordingly, says Canon Widdrington, "we disentangled ourselves from political parties and focused our minds and energies on the recovery and restatement of the idea of Christendom." The book with which we are now presented is the result of a twenty-five years' "retreat to the mountains."

It is not, therefore, surprising that the main strength of the book lies in its theological foundations and its weakness in the sociological implications. In a theologically impeccable statement of the basis for Christian sociology, Mr F. N. Davey gives a valuable corrective to much naïve liberal thinking. "To prove," he says, "that some given idea of a Christian society is based upon Christian principles will hardly serve to demonstrate its authenticity. That would be to argue in the wrong direction. . . . In Christian procedure the starting-point is Christ. . . . Only so can our ideas of Christendom be dictated, not by our own predilections, but by the Word of God."

It is not Mr Davey, however, but Canon Demant, in an essay on "The Idea of a Natural Order," who gives the real theological basis for the distinctive thinking of this group. The aim of the whole book, we are told, is to depict a society which the writers believe is historically

possible and which can deserve the name of Christendom. One of his valuable insights is "that priority of the person over the social process can only become effective where it is part of a whole series of relations that make up a natural order." The main contribution of natural law, it seems, is to establish the following "metaphysical" order of priorities: the family, the cultural side of life, politics, and lastly economics. With this, few will quarrel. For there is today a renewed interest in the family and population problems in non-Christian as well as in Christian circles, and, of course, Karl Marx established a hundred years ago that most of the troubles of modern society arise from the domination of economics over politics.

One cannot help feeling, however, that valuable as is Dr Demant's essay in presenting us with a conception of the natural order integrally bound up with the Christian faith, his contribution to Christian thought is severely marred by his failure to warn his followers of the limitations and pitfalls involved in the "natural law" approach to sociological problems. Unfortunately, the "self-evident truths" of natural law have varied from time to time. For instance, those of the eighteenth century were very different from those of medieval and modern Catholicism. Natural law concepts are very liable to ideological taint, and even though this may be avoided in a statement of moral principles it all too easily creeps in when one states principles of political morality, and still more so when one comes to pass judgment on political and economic issues.

"By their fruits shall ye know them." One good test of the validity of the natural law approach lies in the judgment on contemporary issues passed by writers such as David Peck and Patrick McLaughlin, who consciously build on Dr Demant's foundations. In reviewing this book, Dr J. H. Oldham praises it for not "reflecting what is advocated by the most enlightened thought of the time." From this charge, at least, these two are free. It is, however, a sorry prospect for Christendom if in our necessary opposition to scientific humanism we prefer less enlightened to more enlightened thought.

David Peck's essay on "The Function of Finance" is a most unfortunate mixture of platitudes repeated *ad nauseam*, sneers, and economic howlers. "Why export?" asks this economic expert. Can anyone really be so blind to the fact that this is the only way of getting the raw materials on which our industry depends and the food on which our standard of living depends? The tremendous advantages of international trade are completely ignored, and, faithful to this group's long attachment to Douglas Credit theories, which are refuted by all reputable economists, David Peck bases his main argument on the fallacy that our present economic system is incapable of producing sufficient purchasing power to maintain stability. This, if my reading of his Arabian Nights economics is correct, is due to the banks' demanding repayment of loans as well as making interest charges. But as the banks are always anxious to extend loans to the limit of their capacity, I fail to see why this should result in any loss of purchasing power. The fact that he sometimes gets intuitions which are somewhere near the truth is a poor consolation for the effort of wrestling

with this nightmare of undisciplined thought. He writes: "There is altogether too much running about and talking." If only one practised what one preached, what a boon it would be to the prospects of Christendom!

The agricultural views of this group are now well known. On the basis of natural law, and in the name of dogmatic and philosophical theology, they condemn artificial manures, artificial insemination, and imported foodstuffs, and demand a vastly increased agricultural population, producing all or nearly all of our food at home. In his essay on "Nature and the Rural Man," Patrick McLaughlin gives a more guarded presentation of their views than is usual, but many of the familiar tenets appear. One gathers that maintenance of the fertility of the soil should be the main criterion of agricultural policy, and international trade is again roundly condemned. Were I not a Christian, I think I might well share the views of this group, because my prejudices and interests are heavily on the side of the rural as against the industrial. But may I be forgiven if I am wrong in believing that He who said, "The Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," would also say, "The soil is made for man, and not man for the soil." I am forced, therefore, to sympathize rather with those who say that the purpose of agriculture is, above all, "to feed the people," and who feel that they cannot ignore, as this group sometimes does, the problems of malnutrition, urgent enough in the 1930's and still more so today.

This brings one face to face with a real dilemma. The tackling of malnutrition demands prices which people can afford; therefore, the more efficient agriculture is, the more effectively shall we remove malnutrition. But an efficient agriculture will require less and not more men on the land, and to any reduction in numbers the Christendom group is implacably opposed in the name of natural order. The scales, however, are weighted when one considers that the policy advocated by this group leads to very real economic distress amongst our brothers in Christ overseas. For instance, the growing of sugar beet in this country, besides costing us sixty million pounds in subsidies between 1924 and 1938, caused such untold hardships in the West Indies that the Treasury was forced to make considerable grants to meet the distress. Also one cannot help feeling that we have a Christian concern to improve the material well-being of the worst paid skilled man in the country, the agricultural labourer, and this we can do either by heavier state subsidies or by making agriculture more efficient so that productivity per man is increased. To encourage the farming population to build their future on a foundation of heavy subsidies, which are always liable to withdrawal in a country 93 per cent. of whose population is non-agricultural, is not, I feel, to act in their best interests, especially when it is possible to base a prosperous agriculture on sound economic foundations whilst at the same time satisfying the nutritional requirements of our people as effectively. To say that only those who agree with this group have a spiritual attitude to the land, and are concerned to eliminate soil erosion, is grossly untrue. Space unfortunately does not permit more conclusive proof of how

inadequate and misleading the natural law approach can be in the complicated problems of agricultural policy, and in fact in a whole range of crucial current issues.

I agree with Dr Oldham that the times are too critical for "quarrels between allies in the presence of the enemy," but there are times when one has to speak the truth in love, and, as he himself says, this book is perhaps the most thorough attempt made by a Christian group in any country to state the Christian attitude to the secular order. In the absence of any other statement it may well, therefore, be assumed that this group speaks authoritatively for the Church. Should this be so, a heavy blow will have been struck at the prospects of Christendom in this Age of Science. The gulf between the Church and men of scientific training will become almost impassable, for certain leading members of this group consistently make grossly unfair accusations against modern scientists. In a criticism of their most recent paper, proposing Christian condemnation of artificial insemination for animals, the Bishop of Derby challenges them for their "imputation of pride and irreverence against all natural scientists." Their attacks on economists, too, are incredibly unjust.

Some people today do claim for science that supremacy which belongs to God alone. Whilst we must fight this attitude, we cannot help protesting that when the Christendom Group show no inclination to seek a sympathetic understanding of modern economics, this is surely taking "Lead us not into temptation" a bit too seriously.

This review has been deliberately concentrated on points of criticism in the hope of directing attention to the need of working out a more satisfactory synthesis of Christian thought about the secular order. No one, however, concerned with such a synthesis can afford to neglect the excellent material on a very wide range of subjects contained in this book and perhaps particularly in the chapters on "The Forces Against Us," by Canon Balmforth, and "The Town in Tomorrow's Christendom," by the late Ruth Kenyon.

ERIC W. BREWIN.

LONDON.

CHRIST AND DIVORCE. By Felix L. Cirlot. Published by the author at 152, Locust Street, Versailles, Kentucky, U.S.A. $2.50 post free.

This book is a vigorous and uncompromising defence of the doctrine that marriage is indissoluble, except by death, and that in consequence marriage after divorce is adultery. The first part of the book establishes that this is the clear teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, the second convicts of disloyalty to Him all those who try to evade or water down this teaching. The first part is the more important and the more interesting. Dr Cirlot argues trenchantly that the historical and authentic form of the divorce saying is that contained in Luke xvi, 18: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." In order to strengthen an already overwhelmingly strong case Dr Cirlot intro-

duces an element of speculation in his treatment of the exceptive clause in Matt. xix, 9. He borrows from Dr Easton the arguments (1) that the true reading is that of the minority of MSS which read as in Matt. v, 32, "whoever divorces his wife, except for porneia, makes her an adulteress"; (2) that this reading, both here and in Matt. v, 32, is "Matthew's" correction of an older, un-Jewish, form found in Luke xvi, 18. From this it follows that the Matthæan exception does not allow remarriage to the innocent party in a divorce suit for adultery, and that both Mark and Matthew, in the incident of the controversy with the Pharisees, had before them the saying in its Lucan form. On the strength of this Dr Cirlot argues that that incident was in "Q" and that, apart from his correction of the crucial saying, "Matthew's" account of the incident is nearer his source and more historical. If one accepts all this, the "Matthæan exception" ceases to be a problem. If one rejects it, it still remains quite certain that the Synoptic gospels contain three uncompromising statements that marriage after divorce is adultery and that the fourth, inconsistent, statement, making adultery an exception, is in a form and context which cast the gravest doubts upon its historicity; but it remains, as to its origin, a problem. Dr Cirlot's solution of that problem is ingenious and interesting.

The central chapters of the book contain a detailed, and somewhat repetitive, demolition of various forms of the objection that our Lord's words are not to be taken literally. It makes rather wearisome reading, and is occasionally ill-tempered, but in view of the wide prevalence of this view in one or other of its many forms these chapters are of considerable value in demonstrating the sentimentalism and mental confusion which underlie it. There is also a useful chapter directed against those who argue that our Lord's teaching on divorce must be regarded as open to doubt because the Orthodox Churches permit remarriage after divorce—as though error had a prescriptive right to become truth, if it only holds its ground long enough somewhere. But to my mind the most valuable chapter of all is that in which Dr Cirlot shows that to surrender the principle of the indissolubility of marriage is both gravely detrimental to the welfare of society and grievously unkind to both children and parents in existing marriages.

The book is written for the members of the Episcopal Church in America, who next year will be considering the amendment of their marriage canons. It is an appeal not to yield further to secular pressure. This precise reference and object make the book extremely polemical and tend to obscure its relevance to us here in England. But we too are faced with much the same problem and much the same arguments. It is to be hoped that all those who favour some relaxation of marriage discipline will read this book. If they do, we may be spared much irrelevant and ill-informed controversy.

This book is not, and does not profess to be, an exhaustive study of the Christian doctrine and law of marriage. It is primarily a treatise on the doctrine contained in the Gospels and its consequences. As such it is competent and convincing. Its main defect is its overemphasis; the pages are too liberally splashed with italics and block

capitals. The effect of this over-emphasis is to alienate the reader's sympathy and make him feel that there must be something more to say on the other side. In this way Dr Cirlot injures his own cause. It is a pity.

Robert Mortimer.

Christ Church,
Oxford.

Spiritualism and Religion. By G. W. Butterworth. S.P.C.K. 9s.

Spiritualism has been offered both as a supplement to and as a substitute for the Christian religion. In this book Dr Butterworth discusses its adequacy in these rôles.

Those who would combine spiritualism with Christianity argue that spiritualism provides evidence of the continued existence of the departed and so supports an essential element in the Christian faith. On this point the author argues that the empirical evidence of survival after death is neither necessary to the Christian faith nor adequately provided by spiritualism. Many psychical researchers, convinced of the reality of many of the phenomena attributed to spirits, regard the spiritist explanation of them as very doubtful. There have been several attempts to provide coercive evidence of spirit communication, and the results of all have been far from convincing. There is, for example, an attempt by Mr Whately Carington to demonstrate the autonomy of alleged spirit communicators by the methods of experimental psychology (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. xlii *ff.*) at first erroneously claimed as a successful demonstration of the reality of spirit communicators. But, under critical examination, it appeared that the results were entirely consistent with the hypothesis that there were no real communicators. Against such negative evidence must be weighed the strong conviction of many investigators that some at least of the communications they receive do bear so unmistakably the imprint of the personalities from whom they are supposed to come that they provide strong evidence of being communications from beyond the grave. If, in the future, this were confirmed by conclusive evidence, it would not be entirely unimportant to those who hold the Christian faith. It would, at any rate, make untenable the position of scientific materialism, which is the system of thought most directly opposed to the religious point of view. It would show that Christianity was right in affirming human immortality. A mere demonstration that this Christian dogma is right does not, it is true, carry one far in the direction of the Christian faith, but it is a better stepping-stone to faith than the belief that human life stops with bodily death.

One could have only a caricature of Christianity by isolating belief in "the life everlasting" and making it, not a part of the creed, but the whole of a religious creed. The centre of religious faith is the belief in God, not the belief in other human spirits, as Dr Butterworth rightly insists in his chapter on "Spiritualism and God." If we can communicate with the spirits of the departed by means of mediums, there

remains the question of what is the right thing to do about it. It is possible that there is no harm in such communications provided that they do not absorb so much of our time and energy as to interfere with our own material and spiritual life. It is also arguable that, although such communication is possible, it is always undesirable and even sinful. If the first alternative is accepted and spirit communication is regarded as real and harmless, there is no doubt that from the Christian point of view it must not be allowed to take the place of religion. To turn our hearts from God to the spirits of the departed is to turn from mature religion to a primitive substitute for religion.

R. H. Thouless.

Cambridge.

The Study of St Athanasius. An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford by F. L. Cross, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. Oxford University Press. 2s.

In this lecture with which he entered upon his official duties Prof. Cross shows that he is possessed of what many will consider to be the primary qualification of a teacher—namely, the power to stimulate interest in the subject treated. The new Lady Margaret Professor is obviously an enthusiastic student of Athanasian studies, who is able also to convey to others a measure of his own enthusiasm. In a brief compass we have in this lecture a fresh and interesting account of the history of these studies, with special reference to the monumental labours of Montfaucon in the seventeenth century, and to the fascinating problems which the discovery of new materials has raised for us in the twentieth. In this subject Dr Cross appears as a specialist, to whom his audience, including the wider one now reached by the printed lecture, must needs be in debt.

In illustrating the neglect of Athanasius's writing in the West (all the more remarkable when we consider how the West gave him more than once shelter and welcome when exiled from his native land), Dr Cross might have referred to the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus, which mentions but one work, the letter to Marcellinus *de libro Psalmorum*, and also to the *De Controversia Paschali* of the seventh-century Irish monk Cummian, who in an extended range of patristic references has none to Athanasius, although he would have found there much that was relevant to his subject.

Perhaps the most interesting matter raised in this lecture is the recently discovered fact that there are two texts or recensions of the *De Incarnatione* and its companion work the *Contra Gentes*, the most notable divergences occurring in *c.* 25 of the former work. How can this be accounted for? On p. 13 Dr Cross admits that "here we are in the realms of conjecture," but if pressed for an explanation he suggests (p. 14) that the two recensions of this early work may represent two fair copies, made by Athanasius himself, of a rough draft. We shall await the detailed arguments, based on stylistic considera-

tions, which obviously could not be given in this lecture, for the view that both recensions come from the same hand. But we cannot follow Dr Cross when he seems to suggest that Athanasius, being conscious of the speculative nature of the arguments put forward in the ordinary text of *c.* 25, rewrote the chapter quite differently. On the contrary (see opening of *c.* 26), Athanasius speaks of them as fitting and reasonable, however fantastic some of them may appear to us today. They are just the kind of thing that an Alexandrian, and a young Alexandrian, would take pride in; even as "Barnabas" supposed that his allegorical interpretation of the number of Abraham's servants was as good a thing as he had ever conceived.

J. E. L. Oulton.

Trinity College,
Dublin.

Witchcraft in England. By Christina Hole. Batsford. 21s.

This book is primarily a book of folklore. The author is concerned to give a general account of the practice of witchcraft in this island from the Middle Ages down to the present time. Her account is full of interest and clearly illustrates the many aspects and ramifications of witchcraft. She is most successful in putting the reader back into a past age when belief in witchcraft was almost universal in England, as it still is in some countries today. In this task she is ably assisted by Mr Mervyn Peake, who has profusely illustrated her book with eerie drawings which are most suggestive.

The author, however, makes little attempt to trace the fundamental connexion between the various aspects of the occult which appear in witchcraft. In her opening chapter, entitled "The Art of Magic," she accepts, apparently without question, Sir James Frazer's highly disputable contention that magic is older than religion. She also repeats the remark that magic is primitive science. The truth seems to be that magic is diametrically opposed in principle to science, although it is "applied," as science is "applied," according to certain rules, in this case known only by the witch or medicine man. Indeed, it was the growth of experimental science which led to the repealing in 1737 of the Act whereby witches were liable to punishment by death. It is significant that the Royal Society was founded shortly before that date.

The repealing of this Act, as Miss Hole shows, led at once to the disappearance of many of the most serious abuses associated with witchcraft; it became increasingly difficult to work up "heresy hunts" against suspected witches. This is not to say, however, that the ideas underlying witchcraft disappeared in this country. They merely changed their form, and are with us today in the belief in mascots and horoscopes and in various spiritualistic phenomena, to say nothing of that modern medicine man, the dictator. For wherever the light of science, on the one hand, or true (that is, ethical) religion, on the other, does not shine, the darkness of occultism in some form is invariably to be found.

The book has a useful bibliography, and a good index, although in the latter it is surprising to find Aquinas referred to as "Sir Thomas Aquinas."

LINDSAY DEWAR.

BISHOPS' COLLEGE,
CHESHUNT.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Problem of Christian Humanism. By D. J. B. Hawkins.

St Thomas and Nietzsche. By F. C. Copleston, S.J.

Aquinas Society Papers. Blackfriars, Oxford. 1s. each.

These are two papers read to the Aquinas Society and now deservedly made available to a wider audience.

The first is a judicious and well-balanced discussion of Christian humanism, which is regarded as a practicable and desirable ideal, but one subject to certain inherent limitations. Life is short and the human person is still in the making; and the Church and the world always are, and always must be, more or less in opposition. Yet grace and nature are not antithetic but complementary, and that solves the problem in principle and on the highest level. In the actual, historical conditions of man's life the problem is less easy of solution, and the Church will always need its St Anthony as well as its school of Chartres.

Fr Copleston, confronted with a somewhat bewildering subject for his lecture, wisely confines himself to one aspect of Nietzsche's thought, embodying an extreme statement of the problem of modern man, and suggests a solution on the principles of Thomism. Nietzsche's "nihilism" has come to actuality in the recent European war, though the Nazis are not the only nihilists. The atheism of Nietzsche implies the denial of absolute values; and though Nietzsche thought of himself as the creator of new values, the conflict in his own mind, which was to drive him mad, shows his own despair of escaping from nihilism as long as he denied God. St Thomas, realizing the metaphysical foundations of morality and values, shows the way of escape from the tyranny and the despair which are the practical results of atheism.

H. BALMFORTH.

ELY.

English Prayer Books. By Stanley Morison. Cambridge University Press. 6s.

This is a valuable and in many ways distinguished work on the literature of Christian worship. Mr Morison traces the development of the books which are used in Christian worship, and in the process has produced a fascinating commentary on a side of the history of Christian worship which it is normally difficult to make interesting. He writes expertly, but will be intelligible to any inexpert reader.

The longest and perhaps the most useful section of the book deals with the period from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, and con-

tains much important and interesting information, especially concerned with the style and methods of printing the various books of legal and illegal worship in England at that time.

The chapter at the end on "Present Day Vocational Services" contains various forms of special services; Mr Morison's comments are a model of sympathetic moderation; and this is especially agreeable, for acid but facile remarks might easily have been made.

The postscript is an extended and extremely useful bibliography.

CAMBRIDGE. F. H. MAYCOCK.

The Tyranny of Mathematics. An Essay in the Symbiosis of Science, Poetry and Religion by Geoffrey Hoyland. S.C.M. Press. 1s. 6d.

This essay is based on a course of three lectures delivered at Woodbrooke Summer School in August, 1944, and suffers from being intended for the ear rather than the eye. The author examines the influence of mathematics upon human thought and its damaging effect on the proper balance of thought in Science and Religion. It must be admitted that there is a lot of truth in much that Mr Hoyland has to say; but he spoils the effect by exaggeration and the wrong sort of emotional appeal. He gives the impression of very little first-hand experience of mathematical technique, and fails to show any understanding of the proper relation of the deductive method to thinking in general. This latter and graver defect vitiates his ability to understand Catholicism and, one would venture to say, Christianity. It is significant that Mr Hoyland's religious metaphors are largely taken from the worship of the Catholic Church; yet the author does not pause to think that the very poetic quality which he claims to be supreme in Religion may come only as the result of something greater than itself. Mr Hoyland does not understand Sacraments. "Either the universe is a mechanism, or it is a sacrament—it cannot be *both* in the light of eternal truth" (page 39, author's italics). But the fact remains that in the "light of eternal truth" it is neither, but humanly speaking it is both, and the failure to see beyond this antithesis prevents the essay from being what it sets out to be.

C. D. WADDAMS.

CAMBRIDGE.

Free Will and Science. By J. K. Heydon. Published by the Author. 2s. 6d.

The author states that this book is in response to the request of Sir James Jeans in *Physics and Philosophy* for a statement of the case for Freewill, and in it he deals with a wide range of subjects but not with much clarity. There is plenty of interesting material, but its arrangement makes the book very difficult for consecutive reading. The author too frequently mistakes contradiction for argument, and in some matters (*e.g.*, infinite series on pages 47 and 48) does not properly understand the subject he is discussing. The book cannot honestly be recommended to anyone who is looking for a guide, but would be interesting to a reader who knows the ground already.

CAMBRIDGE. C. D. WADDAMS.

The Attitude of St Thomas to Natural Science. By F. Sherwood Taylor. A paper read to the Aquinas Society on March 11, 1944. Blackfriars. 2s. 6d.

This is a careful consideration of the relation of the thought of St Thomas to modern science. The author wisely avoids the mistake of trying to extract a perfunctory agreement and faces the fact that a thirteenth-century theologian and philosopher did not have an outlook with which the presuppositions of present-day science could necessarily be reconciled. The paper is illustrated with diagrams and deals fairly and clearly with rather a difficult subject. C. D. WADDAMS.

CAMBRIDGE.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(*Mention here neither implies nor precludes subsequent comment.*)

ALLIANCE PRESS: K. Estreicher, *The Mystery of the Polish Crown Jewels* (1s. 6d.).
BIRMINGHAM CHRISTIAN ACTION FELLOWSHIP: James Gray, *Individual Salvation is not Enough* (6d.).
BURNS OATES: H. O'Neill, *Spiritualism* (Present Problem Series) (5s.).
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